WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1. A viewing device for viewing at least one image transparency having an associated tracking memory, the viewing device comprising:

an illumination device having at least one viewing surface adapted to present at least one illumination pattern;

at least one radio frequency read write device for obtaining electronic data stored in an associated tracking memory of an image transparency positioned proximate to the viewing surface;

at least one display device for viewing at least one electronic image related to said at least one image transparency; and

a control processing unit adapted to receive said obtained data from said associated tracking memory and to use the obtained data for forming the at least one electronic image.

2. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein the control processing unit uses the obtained data from said associated tracking memory to obtain a patient related image from a database and forms the at least one electronic image based upon the obtained patient related image,

3. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein the control processing unit uses the obtained data from said associated tracking memory to obtain patient related data and forms the at least one electronic image based upon the obtained patient related data.

4. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein the controller forms the at least one electronic image using at least one of a patient related image and patient related data that is stored in the tracking memory.

5. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein the at least one of the patient related image and patient related data is provided by a medical monitoring device.

6. The viewing device of claim 4, wherein the at least one of the patient related image and patient related data is stored in a network database.

7. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein at least one illumination pattern is generated by the illumination device for passing through at least one image transparency and the appearance of said at least one illumination pattern is determined based upon data obtained from said associated tracking memory associated with said at least one image transparency.

8. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein the at least one illumination pattern is determined based upon data obtained from said associated tracking memory associated with said at least one image transparency.

9. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein said at least one viewing surface comprises a touch screen.

10. The viewing device of claim 8, further comprising a stylus for performing annotations on said viewing surface.

11. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein at one of the at least illumination patterns comprises a generally uniform illumination area and the controller automatically shapes the generally uniform illumination area to correspond with an outline of the image transparency and arranges the generally uniform illumination area so that light from the illumination area passes through the image transparency.

12. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein one of said at least one illumination pattern comprises a generally uniform illumination area wherein the viewing device comprises a sensor for detecting a viewer action that defines the size and placement of the illumination area.

13. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein said radio frequency read write device comprises a radio frequency transponder.

14. The viewing device of claim 1, further comprising a text entry system for receiving an annotation.

15. The viewing device of claim 1, further comprising an audio input system for recording audio information about the at least one image transparency.

16. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein the associated tracking memory stores a network address for the at least one electronic image or related data.

17. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein the associated tracking memory is a radio frequency transponder.

18. The viewing device of claim 17, wherein the radio frequency transponder has a memory for storing the patient identification information.

19. The viewing device of claim 1, wherein the tracking memory also stores information about characteristics of the image transparency and the control-processing unit adjusts the appearance of the image based upon said illumination characteristics stored in memory.

20. The viewing device of claim 1, having a viewing area radio frequency read write device wherein the viewing area radio frequency read write device sends a first electromagnetic field into a viewing area to identify at least one viewer in the viewing area by means of a second electromagnetic field sent from at least one radio frequency transponder associated with the at least one viewer in response to the first electromagnetic field.

21. The viewing device of claim 20, wherein if no second electromagnetic field is received in response to the first electromagnetic field no illumination pattern is illuminated.

22. The viewing device of claim 21, wherein if a second electromagnetic field is received in response to the first electromagnetic field an illumination pattern is illuminated.

23. The viewing device of claim 21, wherein the second electromagnetic field is from a radio frequency transponder associated with at least one viewer.

24. The viewing device of claim 23, wherein data associated with the viewer is recorded in the tracking memory.

25. The viewing device of claim 23, wherein the at least one radio frequency transponder is associated with the at least one viewer has a set of access privileges.

26. The viewing device of claim 23, wherein the tracking memory has a set of access privileges stored therein.

27. The viewing device of claim 26, wherein the control processing unit does not cause an illumination pattern will to be provided for illuminating the image transparency unless the at least one radio frequency transponder associated with the at least one viewer contains a set of viewing privileges that corresponds to viewing privileges in the tracking memory.

28. A viewing device having for viewing at least one image transparency having an associated tracking memory, comprising:

an illumination device having at least one viewing surface adapted to present at least one illumination pattern;

a display device adapted to form at least one electronic image related to said at least one image transparency;

a radio frequency read write device for obtaining electronic data stored in an associated tracking memory of an image transparency positioned proximate to the viewing surface; and

a control processing unit adapted to receive said obtained data from said associated tracking memory and to use the obtained data for forming the at least one electronic image and for controlling the appearance of at least one illumination pattern.

29. The viewing device of claim 28, wherein the at least one electronic image comprises an image that depicts subject matter that is similar to the subject matter of the image transparency but captured at a different time.

30. The viewing device of claim 28, wherein the at least one electronic image comprises an annotation for the image transparency image.

31. The viewing device of claim 28, wherein the illumination area and the electronic image at least partially overlap.

32. The viewing device of claim 28, wherein the control processing unit has an input for receiving an identifier for a viewer and does not allow the illumination device to form an illumination area for viewing the image transparency unless the control processing unit determines, from the obtained data, that the viewer is authorized to view the image transparency.

33. A viewing device for viewing an image transparency having a tracking memory; the apparatus comprising:

a means for reading data from the tracking memory;

a means for presenting at least one image on a display surface ;

a means for forming an illumination pattern for viewing an image transparency; and

a means for using the obtained data in presenting at least one of the electronic image and the illumination pattern.

34. The viewing device of claim 33, wherein the means for using the obtained data in presenting at least one of the electronic image and the illumination pattern is adapted to use the obtained data to access data comprising at least one of a patient related image and patient related data and to use the accessed data to form the electronic image.

35. The viewing device of claim 33, wherein the means for using the obtained data in presenting at least one of the electronic image and the illumination pattern is adapted to use the obtained data to access data indicating at least one of

information about the image transparency, the time that the image was recorded on the image transparency and the imaging process used to record the image on the image transparency and to use the accessed data to form the electronic image.

36. The viewing device of claim 33, further comprising means for detecting viewers proximate to the viewing device, to use the obtained data to determine whether the detected viewers are authorized to view the image transparency and means for preventing the formation of an illumination area where at least one viewer is not authorized to view the image transparency.